

COUNTERFEIT PAINTINGS.

THEIR WHOLESALE MANUFACTURE NEAR
FONTAINEBLEAU—HOW THE FRAUD
WAS DISCOVERED.

FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE: Paris, Aug. 25.—An unexpected support has just been furnished to American advocates of the suppression of the duty of 30 per cent on foreign paintings and works of art imported in the United States. One of their arguments was to the effect that, as thus made, the importation dearer, Americans would purchase only paintings of renowned artists, and consequently that there would be a stronger incitement to selling them counterfeits skilfully gotten up. Nobody could buy common-rate paintings, when it cost no more, at least as to customs house duties, to import fictitious works of art. The artists of the two worlds easily understood that, and this is why they applauded so warmly the announcement made by the United States Minister on the opening of the American Artists' Circle in Paris, that the House of Representatives at Washington had abolished the duty of 30 per cent. They hope at present that the recent discovery of the stupendous frauds perpetrated by some art-walkers without any scruples may persuade the American Senate to maintain the abolition decreed by the House.

The counterfeiters were discovered through the exertions of the sister of the famous painter Courbet, who died a few years ago. His paintings, however, were not the only ones upon which counterfeiters exercised their nefarious practices, and a whole lot of landscapes, portraits, virgin and historical scenes were found offered for sale at Brussels, the great emporium for that kind of spurious works of art. In the month of July, says "Le Temps" of Paris, the catalogue of a large sale of paintings to be held at Brussels was sent to all papers of the Continent. In that catalogue figured a "standing portrait of Courbet's sister," by her brother. He had made, indeed, three or four portraits of her, but in bust, and she could not remember of having ever being painted "standing" by him. She went to Brussels, accompanied by her cousin, Eugenie Courbet, a treasurer for the city of Paris. They saw that the portrait was that of some woman, but not at all of Miss Courbet, and they caused a rectification to be made on the catalogue.

In the course of their investigations it was learned that a Brussels dealer, also the owner of a store in Paris, possessed a whole lot of alleged paintings by the great masters. Troyon, Corot, Courbet, etc. The dealer ordered them to be painted by some artists, the principal of whom lived at Marlotte, the celebrated village in the midst of the Fontainebleau forest, the cherished gathering place of so many foreign and French artists, and not far from the place inhabited by Millet, the painter of "The Angelus." Those counterfeiting painters had each his "specialty." Some were very good imitations of Courbet. One of them had been the pupil and friend of the great artist, and he so perfectly imitated his style that one of his counterfeits was admitted at the Louvre in Paris. The dealer sold a number of spurious painted objects offered for sale by the Brussels dealer. The latter, in order to give to the imitated paintings a better appearance of the genuine, which were known to date some years ago, had them converted into sets of pictures of peculiar arrangement, and thus they looked to have the size they would have had if genuine. These "fancies" facilitated the sale of those spurious works of art, but now the nefarious trade of the Brussels dealers, at an end, for he was compelled to close his shop.

TO FIND A CO-OPERATIVE COMMUNITY.

Chicago, Sept. 6 (Special).—W. W. Catlin, of the Board of Trade; J. W. Howell, of the firm of Norton, Burley & Howell; and E. L. Brooks, of the firm of R. S. Hobbs & Co., are at the head of a plan which embraces a co-operative community to be established between Sheridan Road and the Lake Shore in the northern part of Evanston. The settlement will comprise twelve handsome homes, each 60x125 feet lots, ranged around a central lawn or court, at one end of which, on the edge of a bluff, a club-house will be erected. All twelve houses, besides the club-house, will be lighted and heated from one central plant. In this latter building will also be a complete central kitchen and laundry, which will supply the needs of the twelve families who will form the community. The company intends to save money and increase comfort in many ways. By purchasing four acres of land in a lump the cost of each lot will be materially lessened. Again, as all twelve houses will be built at once the contractor will naturally figure close, and bid as low as possible, and when everything is in running order, two or three hired men are to do the necessary work on the premises, and two or three experienced cooks with unskilled assistants will attend to the cooking of the community. Even a greater saving is anticipated in the laundry.

The club-house on the bluff, with heat and hot-houses below it on the beach, will be an attractive feature, and will lead many to take shares in the project. The company has secured riparian rights, so that nothing stands in the way of making aquatics a prominent feature of the scheme. The terms upon which the members are to be admitted are that each member, after having a partner and twelfth owner, besides having his own lot and an unremunerated deed to it. Like any other club, no one is admitted who is not congenial to every member of the organization, and no member can sell his property to a person not unanimously favored by the company.

FOR UNITING THE REFORMED CHURCHES.

Lancaster, Penn., Sept. 7.—The Rev. Dr. Thomas G. Apple, a commissioner of the German Reformed Church, returned last night from the Conference of the German and Dutch Reformed churches in the United States, held in the Catskills, to prepare a plan for federal union. The Commission agreed upon a plan to create a body to be called the Federal Synod of Reformed Churches, the members to be chosen by the General Synods, and to have charge of the mission, Sunday-school and educational work of the Reformed Church. The articles of federation must be approved by the classes of both Reformed churches.

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